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ABSTRACT

Supervisory issues as they relate to the training of family therapists have been a concern for the past two decades. Many developmental theories suggest that the trainee-supervisor relationship moves through a series of stages similar to the process of moving from childhood to adulthood. A few theorists have developed procedures whereby supervisory interactions could be analyzed for the purpose of observing these developmental changes; one model to explore this change was developed at the Northern Illinois University Family Center. Audiotapes of supervisory planning sessions of marriage and family therapy trainees and their three supervisors were used over a 4-month period. Categories of statements within interactions and then category definitions were developed. Fifteen mutually exclusive categories were defined, i.e., exploring emotional responses; expressing emotional responses; encouraging feelings and ideas; reflecting overt messages; giving facts/feelings to impede responses; giving facts/feelings to encourage responses; redirecting communication; requesting information; giving information; giving direction via exploratory questions; giving information with self deprecation; giving information with limitations; giving information with a sense of command; giving information with self assurance; and equal sharing of information and ideas. Current research using this model will attempt to prove that the frequency of certain kinds of statements indicates patterns of change. (BL)

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CONCEPTUALIZING SUPERVISION ON A DEVELOPMENTAL CONTINUUM

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ABSTRACT

CONCEPTUALIZING SUPERVISION ON A DEVELOPMENTAL CONTINUUM

Change in the Family Therapy supervisory relationship has been considered as early as 1961 but few have developed procedures whereby supervisory interactions could be analyzed for purposes of observing changes. A model to explore this change was developed using audio tapes of supervisory planning sessions. Participants were marriage and family therapy trainees and three supervisors at Northern Illinois University Family Center. Categories of statements within interactions were developed. Category definitions were developed so that each statement could be placed in only one category. It was hypothesized that frequency of kinds of statements would indicate patterns of change. Fifteen categories were defined that were mutually exclusive and yet encompassed all statements heard on the tapes. The system of categories of the supervisory interactions are not tied to a specific theory. Examples of statements in each category are given.

CONCEPTUALIZING SUPERVISION ON A DEVELOPMENTAL CONTINUUM

By Caryl T. Moy, Ph.D. and Earl O. Goodman, Ed.D.

The number of programs and presentations now focusing on supervision issues, tells us that this topic of our profession is finally but rapidly getting the study it deserves. The quantity as well as quality of literature now available is an indicator that supervision is a fast growing sibling in a young adult profession. This presentation is intended to add to this spotlight and to share with you a system of classifications of interaction statements that we have identified in supervision.

Originally we were anticipating using a theoretical developmental continuum, when we realized that we must first identify the kinds of interactions we are hearing before we can assume they would fit into any model. After the categories are presented, their usefulness in showing change over time in supervision will be discussed. Then I will interpret how these changes may indicate development.

It is interesting to note that change in the supervisory relationship in family therapy was considered as early as 1961 when Dean Johnson drew attention to the supervisory process and stated that it was experienced by a counselor-in-training by stages. He delineated these through preceptions of the trainee. The supervisor is first seen to be a judge, then an evaluator-helper, moving on through to a teach-helper. In the early 70's Ard suggested that a way of looking at supervision development was over time with evolving roles for both that of the supervisor and the supervisee. He saw these two professionals moving together through preceptorship, apprenticeship, mentorship, sponsorship and finally to peership relations. Tucker, along with Liddle and Hart, discussed content from a developmental perspective within group

supervision. The context was a debriefing session following observation of cotherapists, usually two trainees, working with a family. They stated that the supervision would usually begin with the cotherapist discussing their relationship, moving into how they interacted with the family, then family contact, perhaps in relation to their own life adjustment, and then how this fits into family theory. Barbara Fisher proposed that in all supervision there is a model of material and agendas. At the AMFT Conference in 1980 she outlined a conceptual model of the process and content of supervision that included looking at the relationship on an authorization-egalitarian scale. Craig Everett presented a theoretical model of development in 1981 at the same conference. In it he likened the process of supervision to one of differentiation such as the process of moving from childhood to adulthood. Issues that he senses are usually taking place in this model involve control, feelings about learning, feelings about being a professional, attention to systems change versus individual dynamics, and obedience versus self-evaluation.

It is the Everett model that sparked our interest here and prompted us to develop a procedure whereby we could analyze supervisory interactions for purposes of observing change in a supervisory relationship. To do this we taped supervisory interactions on audio-tape and developed categories of statements within the interactions. We hypothesized that change would occur over time, that frequency of kinds of statements would indicate patterns, and perhaps correlate with the Everett developmental model. This research was done at Northern Illinois University's Family Center with this year's class of family therapy trainees and their three supervisors. We are grateful to Mark Teisman, the Director, and to Betsy Dickinson, Graduate Student, for their cooperation in this project.

Supervision at the NIU Family Center includes a twenty-five minute planning session prior to the therapy session, live supervision during the fifty minute sessions, and a debriefing session as needed for 15-25 minutes following.

For this study, the supervisors and students audio-taped their planning sessions at the end of each month for four months. Not all students had all three supervisors. Supervisor/supervisee were determined by case assignment and client availability. The tapes provided data, from which the researchers developed definitions for categories of statements in interactions. We looked at the tapes with no preconceived ideas of the nature of supervision interaction. The objective was to develop definitions of each category so that each statement could be placed in only one category.

The procedures for building the project went as follows. The tapes were listened to carefully by two evaluators and statements were categorized. A statement was defined as the uninterrupted comment of one person. They, independently, developed categories of interaction as they interpreted what they heard on the tapes. After much discussion and questioning, categories were redefined until the researchers and the evaluators agreed that the categories were mutually exclusive and yet encompassed all statements heard on the tapes. Then the evaluators listened to the same tape, analyzing each statement according to the categories. They recorded their categoration without consultation and attained a 95% agreement. Let me go through these and present some examples for each category.

1. Exploring emotional responses to therapy situation or to supervision.

This would be asking for one of the partners to share how he/she feels, inviting him/her to share their reaction of the moment, example would be, "How are you feeling?" Or "What I just said, how did you react to that?"

2. Expressing emotional response to the therapy situation or to supervision.

"That really took me by surprise." Or "I feel drained." Or "I am feeling kind of scared after they made me feel I was indispensable." This might be a statement that follows an invitation from number 1 response.

3. Encouraging and/or reassuring feelings and ideas.

It would depend on the situation; usually this would be a supervisor speaking to the therapist, "What do you hope to do about that? It appears that you were on the right track in spite of their refusing to contact her mother." "Were you as relieved as I think you were?"

4. Reflecting by restating overt message and/or reflecting covert message.

"So what they are telling you is they have a secret that they are not yet willing to share. Perhaps their not sharing that secret is a message that they are still wondering about you."

5. Giving of facts and/or expressing feelings and/or interpretations in such a way as to impede responses from the other person.

Sometimes this would be done by voice inflection as well as by statement. "This is the only choice I had." "No, this is really how it happened." "I am convinced that this is the only way to go."

6. Giving of facts and/or expressing feelings and/or interpretations in such a way as to encourage responses from the other person.

Again it might be with the non-verbal voice inflection that this category would be identified. "This is what I did and it felt fine; I'm not real sure." These statements tend to invite the response of the other person in a supervisory relationship.

7. Interrupting other person in such a way as to redirect communication.

"But, this is the Family Center; it's not the Ackerman Center." Or, "OK, they told you all that. Now let's look at what they are really telling you."

8. Requesting information for sense of equal participation.

"What came out at the last session?" "What did you find out about the school problem?" This is a statement that invites comment of fact and content, rather than of reaction or interpretation.

9. Giving information to give direction.

"The Easter Seal Society works very well with people who are physically handicapped. They are located on Center Street and it might be worth checking into."

10. Giving direction by exploratory questioning.

"Do you think you could check into the community resources that could be helpful to them?" "What's going to substitute in their lives when they terminate?"

11. Giving information with self-deprecation.

An example here is, "I really am not sure how I did that, it's not my style to work that way."

12. Giving information with a statement of limitation.

"I asked them the words they used to talk about sex in their family. This was a bit hard for me because I was always taught the only place for me to talk about this was at home."

13. Giving information with a sense of command.

"He can't win. You'll have to get the parent system back in charge."
"You'll have to get the father in if you are going to get anywhere with this case."

14. Giving information with self-assurance.

"And then they were telling me that things are better, that each of them is getting a half hour a day to themselves and that they were pleased that I had helped them work out that problem."

15. Sharing equally information and ideas.

This would be a situation in which the therapist is providing information of what has happened in a session; primarily, content, but including some process and the supervisor perhaps asking a few questions but also presenting their ideas on how to interpret it or how to proceed. An example of these might be, "From what you are telling me, it seems like they are in a pattern of engagement and disengagement." Response: "Right now it appears that they are in a real disengagement cycle."

This system of categories is now being used to analyze supervisory interactions recorded on audio tape, over a nine month training period. The intent is to look at the interaction, not necessarily case progress. The first four statements from each tape, the four statements at thirteen minutes, and the last four statements of the final weekly 25 minute planning session each month will be categorized. It is hypothesized that change in the number of categories over time will be one indicator of the development of the trainee in supervision.

"Conceptualizing Supervision on a Developmental Continuum."

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